Greetings

For more than 80 years, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin has worked directly with America’s farmers, ranchers and forest landowners. We are helping people make investments in their operations and local communities to keep our working lands working.

This year has brought many opportunities for NRCS to work directly with private landowners through the new 2018 Farm Bill. In 2019, the bill has allowed NRCS to strengthen and expand support to producers who address significant natural resource concerns through adoption of conservation practices. Through our Environmental Quality Incentives Program, for example, the funding cap was raised for organic producers, there are new enrollment options through incentive contracts, an advance payment option was added for historically underserved producers, and much more. Through the Conservation Stewardship Program, payment rates were increased for farmers willing to adopt cover crop rotations and advanced grazing management activities. Each NRCS program has improvements to strengthen conservation opportunities at the local level. The new Farm Bill allows NRCS to support conservation that ensures cost-effective financial assistance for improved soil health, water and air quality, and other natural resources benefits.

In this annual report, you’ll learn about our 2019 program successes, along with highlights of the work we do. Through our continued focus and emphasis on conservation planning, we are connecting with customers on farms and in field offices across the state to develop and implement plans to protect, conserve and enhance our natural resources. We will continue to be boots on the ground through locally-led conservation, meeting the unique natural resource and business goals of those who grow our nation’s food and fiber. We’re ‘Helping People Help the Land’ to ensure our natural resources are regenerative for future generations.

Angela Biggs
Wisconsin State Conservationist

Our Agency

NRCS works with farmers, ranchers and forest landowners across the country to help them boost agricultural productivity and protect our natural resources through conservation.

Our Staff

NRCS in Wisconsin has over 200 staff across the state to meet the unique resource needs of our farmers and landowners. Every county in Wisconsin is supported by 55 USDA Service Centers located in many counties across the state. Our offices (see right) provide customer service at the local level.
State Resource Priorities

1. Water Quality Degradation
2. Soil Erosion
3. Soil Quality Degradation
4. Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife
5. Degraded Plant Conditions
6. Livestock Production Limitation
7. Excess Water and Insufficient Water
8. Air Quality Impacts
9. Insufficient Energy Use

Conservation Results

378,646 acres of cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality
456,979 acres of conservation applied to improve environmental quality
437,596 acres with conservation applied to improve water quality

35,606 acres of cropland with conservation applied to improve soil health and sustainability.
24,842 acres of non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat.
17,503 acres of grazing land with conservation applied to improve the resource base.
9,049 acres of grazing land with conservation applied for a sustainable forage-animal balance.
2,256 conservation plans were written on 312,490 acres.
1,882 acres with conservation applied to improve agricultural irrigation water management.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides voluntary conservation promoting agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality to help install or implement structural, agronomic or management conservation practices to protect soil and water quality. In fiscal year 2019, NRCS staff worked to establish 1,661 contracts, enrolling 187,970 acres. Conservation results are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.07 MIL. dollars were obligated in 112 EQIP contracts on 22,701 acres through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.</td>
<td>627,418 dollars were obligated in 7 EQIP contracts covering 4,633 acres for the National Water Quality Initiative.</td>
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<td>5.89 MIL. dollars were obligated in 202 EQIP contracts covering 57,497 acres for the Soil Health Initiative.</td>
<td>481,033 dollars were obligated in 20 EQIP contracts covering 2,901 acres for the Mississippi River Basin Initiative.</td>
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<td>5.84 MIL. dollars were obligated in 345 EQIP contracts covering 20,248 acres for New and Beginning Farmers.</td>
<td>343,441 dollars were obligated in 29 EQIP contracts covering 9,011 acres for Socially Disadvantaged Groups.</td>
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<td>2.21 MIL. dollars were obligated in 59 EQIP contracts covering 8,765 acres for On-Farm Energy.</td>
<td>285,418 dollars were obligated in 33 EQIP contracts covering 54 acres for High Tunnel Systems.</td>
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<td>1.74 MIL. dollars were obligated in 114 EQIP contracts covering 3,574 acres for the Honey Bee Pollinator Initiative.</td>
<td>257,593 dollars were obligated in 14 EQIP contracts covering 867 acres for the Organic Initiative.</td>
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<td>736,986 dollars were obligated in 294 EQIP contracts covering 22,401 acres for Conservation Activity Plans.</td>
<td>151,961 dollars were obligated through EQIP to 7 Tribes covering 976 acres for conservation improvements.</td>
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Top 10 EQIP Practices by Financial Investment

1. **Cover Crop**
   - Practice count implemented: 1,061
   - Funds obligated: $8,662,177

2. **Waste Storage Facility**
   - Practice count implemented: 35
   - Funds obligated: $3,197,953

3. **Streambank and Shoreline Protection**
   - Practice count implemented: 166
   - Funds obligated: $3,087,540

4. **Pond Sealing or Lining - Concrete**
   - Practice count implemented: 19
   - Funds obligated: $2,275,271

5. **Lighting System Improvement**
   - Practice count implemented: 115
   - Funds obligated: $1,717,714

6. **Waste Facility Closure**
   - Practice count implemented: 62
   - Funds obligated: $1,541,949

7. **Fence**
   - Practice count implemented: 361
   - Funds obligated: $1,396,114

8. **Heavy Use Area Protection**
   - Practice count implemented: 97
   - Funds obligated: $1,388,496

9. **Waste Transfer**
   - Practice count implemented: 45
   - Funds obligated: $1,015,925

10. **Roofs and Covers**
    - Practice count implemented: 11
    - Funds obligated: $937,453
Top 10 EQIP Practices by Practice Count

1. **Cover Crop**
   - Practice count implemented: 1,061
   - Funds obligated: $8,662,177

2. **Prescribed Grazing**
   - Practice count implemented: 423
   - Funds obligated: $818,062

3. **Mulching**
   - Practice count implemented: 373
   - Funds obligated: $473,632

4. **Fence**
   - Practice count implemented: 361
   - Funds obligated: $1,396,114

5. **Brush Management**
   - Practice count implemented: 276
   - Funds obligated: $364,779

6. **Grassed Waterway**
   - Practice count implemented: 256
   - Funds obligated: $868,339

7. **Residue and Tillage Management No-Till**
   - Practice count implemented: 235
   - Funds obligated: $443,817

8. **Forest Management Plan Written**
   - Practice count implemented: 222
   - Funds obligated: $366,824

9. **Critical Area Planting**
   - Practice count implemented: 200
   - Funds obligated: $71,631

10. **Livestock Pipeline**
    - Practice count implemented: 195
    - Funds obligated: $595,782
Conservation Stewardship Program

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP provides assistance to landowners who practice good stewardship on their land and are willing to take additional steps over the next five years.

18.2 MILLION
WAS PROVIDED IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
FOR 580 NEW AND 223 EXTENSION CONTRACTS

126,280 acres were enrolled for new Conservation Stewardship Program contracts.

13.6 MIL.
was provided in Conservation Stewardship Program fiscal year 2019 payments.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands, wetlands and their related benefits. Wetland Reserve Easements provide technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners and Indian tribes to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through the purchase of a Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE). Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) provide financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. In the case of working farms, the program helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture.

252 ACRES
WERE RESTORED THROUGH WETLAND RESERVE EASEMENTS

1.9 MIL.
was obligated for ACEP-ALE on 13 easements covering 1,051 acres (includes RCPP easements).

1.1 MIL.
was obligated in 6 agreements for ACEP-WRE covering 451 acres.
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) uses partnerships to multiply conservation investments and reach goals on a regional or watershed scale, promoting coordination between partners to deliver assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance through partnership agreements and program contracts or easement agreements.

5.3 MILLION
WAS PROVIDED IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH RCPP.

14,770 acres were enrolled through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

148 contracts were established in 2019 through RCPP-EQIP and RCPP-CSP. Nine easements were established through RCPP-ACEP.

Partnerships in Focus

Partnerships make our mission possible by leveraging existing funds to put more conservation on the ground. In fiscal year 2019, NRCS Wisconsin collaborated with conservation partners to enter into 22 new agreements. These agreements leverage NRCS financial investments with partner contributions to accomplish conservation priorities and address natural resource concerns. NRCS Wisconsin thanks the following partners for their collaboration and financial commitment in making conservation work.

4.6 MILLION INTO AGREEMENTS, WITH FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS FROM PARTNERS TOTALING OVER $800,000.

Calumet County Land & Water Conservation Department
Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership
Dane County UW-Extension
Glacierland Resource Conservation & Development
Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development
Marathon County Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department
Monroe County Land Conservation Department
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Oneida Nation
Pierce County Land Conservation Department
River Country Resource Conservation & Development
Rock County Land Conservation Department
University of Wisconsin System
Vernon County Land & Water Conservation Department
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
Wisconsin Land + Water Association
Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land

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